

COVID-19: Public Assistance for Volunteer Fire Companies

What is Public Assistance?

Public assistance (PA) is a reimbursement program in which certain entities can receive Federal funds for costs incurred as a result of a declared disaster event; in this case, the declared disaster is COVID-19, designated at DR-4506 for Pennsylvania.

Applicant Eligibility

During this event (COVID-19) fire companies are similar in nature to a private non-profit hospital when it comes to applicant eligibility. When submitting a request for Public Assistance they will need to provide an IRS 501c, d, or e form, a copy of their charter/bylaws, and facility information.

Work Eligibility

- Work done to respond to COVID-19 at the direction of another county/state entity. This is typically captured through an MOU and the fire company would be reimbursed for work done by the county/state entity, and the county/state entity would claim those costs as the responsible FEMA PA Applicant.
- Work done to respond directly to COVID-19. Regular response calls are not eligible under this event. As such, the fire company will have to split out costs incurred due to COVID-19 calls, typically done by submitting relevant call logs. If work is deemed eligible then any equipment time, and materials used would be eligible if they are not covered by another funding stream (i.e. insurance, or HHS/CDC grant)
- Labor hours performed during eligible work can be captured under a donated resources project to offset their 25% cost share if tracked properly. To be eligible, work must be a direct result to COVID-19 and be the legal responsibility of the applicant or have been directed to do an activity by a local, state, or federal public health official.

What is NOT eligible?

While an organization may be eligible, not all of their work/costs will be eligible. Ineligible costs include:

- Loss of revenue
- Loss of useful service life
- Tax assessments
- Increased operating costs

Grants Portal & Other Information

Grant Portal is the platform used by FEMA to facilitate the Public Assistance Grants process. In order to apply for Public Assistance funding, you must have a Grants Portal account for your facility. For more information or to access the form to request a Grants Portal account please visit the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Public Assistance website:

<https://www.pema.pa.gov/Recovery/Pages/default.aspx>